

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB OEXC SCUL EAID BC
SUBJ: AFL-CIO CONVENTION DECEMBER 8-14, 1977

REF: STATE 48025

1. EMBOFF INTERVIEWED PELOTELELE TLHAODI, DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY OF BOTSWANA FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS AND LEADER OF BOTSWANA BANK WORKERS UNION. TLHAODI WAS GENERALLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT HIS TRIP TO THE U.S.; AND WHEN ASKED FOR CRITIQUE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE, MADE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC POINTS:

A. HIGHLIGHTS OF TRIP WERE AFRICAN SYMPOSIA, THE ONLY EVENT IN WHICH AFRICAN LABOR LEADERS WERE ABLE TO EXPLAIN FACTS OF SOUTH AFRICA AND OTHER PROBLEMS TO HIGH-LEVEL AMERICANS IN LABOR AND GOVERNMENT. UNFORTUNATELY, GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SYMPOSIA, THE LENGTH WAS ALL TOO SHORT AND MANY AFRICANS DID NOT HAVE A CHANCE FOR ADEQUATE EXPRESSION. TIME ALLOTTED FOR THE SYMPOSIA SHOULD BE DOUBLED.

B. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE AVERAGE LAYMAN WHO KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT AMERICAN LABOR TO UNDERSTAND WHAT TOOK PLACE AT THE AFL-CIO CONVENTION AND, THEREFORE, MUCH WENT OVER THE HEADS OF THE AFRICAN VISITORS (TLHAODI EXCEPTED). TLHAODI BELIEVES
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THE GROUP SHOULD HAVE HAD AN ADEQUATE BRIEFING BEFOREHAND (PRESUMABLY ON ORGANIZATION, MECHANICS AND ISSUES OF CONVENTION).

C. SOME OF THE LESSER VISITS MIGHT HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THE TRAVEL PROGRAM; LOCAL LABOR LEADERS ALWAYS SAID THE SAME THING ON AFRICAN POLITICAL ISSUES. IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO SPEND BULK OF TIME ON SUBSTANCE (E.G., AFRICAN SYMPOSIA) THAN ON "SEEING

THE COUNTRY".

D. ONE OF HIGHLIGHTS OF TLHAODI'S TRIP WAS AN UNSCHEDULED AND ACCIDENTAL VISIT MADE TO A "WORKERS' BANK" IN NEW YORK CITY (NAME UNKNOWN), WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO GIVE WORKERS LOW-INTEREST LOANS SO THEY CAN AVOID COMMERCIAL BANKS. TLHAODI SAID HE HAS BROACHED IDEA HERE AND RANK AND FILE ARE ANXIOUS TO CONTRIBUTE TO FOUNDING A SIMILAR BANK. PERHAPS DEPARTMENT COULD SCHEDULE SUCH A TRIP FOR THE NEXT LABOR VISITORS.

2. POST APPRECIATES DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST FOR FOLLOW UP ON TRIPS OF AFRICAN LABOR LEADERS TO THE U.S. AND IS MAINTAINING DIRECT CONTACT WITH GRANTEES. WE SHALL ADVISE DEPARTMENT OF ANY SUBSTANTIVE LOCAL PROGRAMS RESULTING FROM THE EXPERIENCES GAINED BY GRANTEES ON THE TRIP.
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